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DIVINE FIRE

And Other Poems

EVELYN M. WATSON



DIVINE FIRE

And Other Poems

BY

EVELYN M. WATSON



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Dedicated
with appreciation to
Mr. Howard Hillis

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DIVINE FIRE

And Other Poems



Divine Fire and Other Poems

DIVINE FIRE

Living green of grasses, olive glint of trees,
Oriflammes of iris quivering to the breeze.

Tulip braziers smouldering, dandelions' spark,
Rosebush candles lighted against the smoky dark.

Gas-like gleam of balsam, electric flare of phlox,
Poppy torches blowing, illumined four-o'clocks.

Cosmos stars a-twinkling, too beautiful to name,
Nasturtium blossoms bursting into tongues of
flame;

Violet blaze of clematis pushing 'gainst the door,
Fields a-surge with clover, hill and valley o'er.

Chrysanthemums a-tossing balls of magic fire,
Ember-glow of zinnias and dahlias to admire.

Sunflower censers swaying, thistle lamps turned
low,
Hollyhocks unflaming, flashing goldenglow.

Forest fires in autumn, as leaves their colors turn;
Kindled fields of asters where goldenrod torches
now burn.

Living colors moving under Heaven's flame—
The Burning Bush revealing, His fiery truths
proclaim!

THE POET

The restless waves of the laboring sea
Are never quite so wild
As the ceaseless tides that have travailed in me
Since I was only a child.
The awesome heights of mountain peaks
Are never half as high
As the mountain of hopes that ever seeks
To pierce the Spirit's sky.
Your roaring rivers are not so fast
As rivers of thoughts that flow,
And storms and calms and shuddering blast
Are less than the ones I know
Within my Soul—in the Spirit of me—
The trumpeting storms and furious fires!
What know you of rivers and winds and sea,
And sun-loved mountain spires?

PROTECTION

Dewdrops sleep in violet eyes,
Guarding the violets, sway the ferns;
Above the ferns the birches rise,
Above the birches glow far skies,
And over all God, watching, yearns.

FROM A HOSPITAL

And what may you bring to make my long day
glad?

Not food to feed my fevered discontent,
Nor any goods nor gear that may be had—
Bring now fair stars of Spirit's firmament!

Of little grasses tell, in artless green,
Of mosses where abide wee living things—
Bring memories of silvery ponds between
Giant arching trees where lichen clings.

Bring fringy asters, gold and mystic blue,
Bring weeds we know, that carpet forest floors,
Bring twinkling leaves from larch and poplar,
too—
Bring me the living breath of all Outdoors!

And, best of all, dare now to come to me,
Empty of hand, your soul a flowing well,
Then let me drink my fill, and help me see
The magic world of which you came to tell!

THE FLAMEN

Out in the dark my mother went,
Out in the night where death-winds blow,
And gathered me against her breast:
Into my form her form was spent,
Into my heart her heart's rich glow,
Into my body her best, Love's best.

This Temple she built for the flickering flame,
This House I live in day by day—
She gave my body to me.
From night she drew my star-traced name,
From day she gathered my passion's play,
Thus binding me fast, but free, so free!

And the Flamen God gave, creation-wise,
As mine in my temple, "not built by hands"—
My soul, High Priestess there,
"Whence, whence?" I cry with widening eyes—
Her answer? My questioning heart under-
stands:
"Your soul, dear vestal, was mother's
prayer!"

THE BUILDER

I stumble, an unskilled mason, over odd and
shapeless stones,
Over many blocks I cannot seem to use:
It's thus I build the Temple—ruthless cast aside
What seems as waste—and ever pick and
choose.

And yet these awkward pieces all come to find
some place,
And one by one into those places fall:
So be it when my livelihood's noblest work is
done—
I'll find at last that I have used them all.

The weird philosophies that seem to bother me,
The theories I fail to understand,
Give each a building block for me to work upon—
The oft-rejected stone I last command.

Upon the summit, the most-rejected Stone's a
crown;
(Each theory has place within the whole—)
There is no waste, no loss and everything is
strong—
And thus I build the Temple of my Soul.

THE APPRENTICE

I am a-building on the rocks of time,
And do not have His Plan in view;
I know not what I build, nor seek to find—
I have not yet attained a master mind.
I've builded better than I know or knew,
And what I build I fix, secure and true.
Only the Master knows how well I work—
And He will put me forward, turn me back;
He knows what powers I have, what gifts I lack,
And marks the many times I've sought to shirk.
When I've attained to be a more-than-man
Perhaps I'll know the Master's mighty Plan.

PHENOMENON

For every thousand birds that I have seen
I've never seen a dozen birdies dead.
Kind Nature hides them in her mantle green,
For Nature has so very little said
Concerning death, she quite forgets the scene,
And vivid living things spring up, instead!

A CLASSIC FRIEZE

Blue-gray twilight—as from some classic frieze—
Bright-faced children play, forgetful of coming
Curfew,
Their smocks and frocks, plain, stout-woven stuff,
chiefly blue—
 Ring-a-round-the-rosy,
 Drop-the-handkerchief,
 London Bridge, London Bridge!
Against the cool, coppery-green and bronze-light-
ed turf
With blue tones strongly etched, the youngsters
frolic!
The haze of evening veils all in tender tints.
 The Curfew!
Frozen in posture, as one figure, silent,
The children stand for a brief but colossal second.
The curfew sounds! Go call Della Robbia!
A classic frieze! Leonardo! Come again!

THE YOUTH AND THE SHELL

(To a Conch Shell in Grandfather's Parlor)

A grove of pines, a crescent of sand,
A sweep of green, sun-mottled sea,
Above, an eagle's wheeling flight,
Below, the breaker's maddened might—
A pink-lipped shell brings these to me.

Through limy covers, curled and turned,
I learn the lore of the magic sea;
In mystic chambers, color-spanned,
I find a little world full-planned—
Thou ear, thou voice, thou mystery!

Long lines of coast in dull, dead black—
And inky black lies the lapping sea—
See! Morning fleets 'mid sun-traced hours,
Fisher villas with clustering towers!
These pass. A pink pearl shell for me.

Blue sky, blue sea, a few white sails,
A fluttering bird above the lea—
Is the murmuring voice from out the deep
The promise of One who watch will keep?
O listening ear, I question thee.

In far, dark channels of waters cold,
The stillest deeps of the stillest sea,
Where star-things crawl in watery night,
And flower-things mutely crave the light,
Afar in thy pinkish whorl I see.

What dweller made thee for his home?
What chastening set that rainbow free?
What foamy wave-crest bore thee up?
What sandy waters filled thy cup?
What sailor found and cherished thee?

A cup, a cave, a voice, an ear,
A rainbow world art thou to me.
Does my heart grow great in the sea of souls?
In the flood and flow that over me rolls
Do I find the colors and set them free?

THE LARK

The lark, untutored, trills her song, her rapture
 through it thrills,
And not a note is sounded wrong that echoes to
 the hills;
A golden, glowing melody, it bursts upon the air,
And comes in flowing floods to me, who listen in
 despair.
It rises, tides and ebbs to measure—it hangs
 suspended, falls—
It rings and sings and echoes pleasure and rides
 the airy halls.
It arches, flashes, breaks and mends, then curves,
 a rainbow clear—
A thousand perfect sounds it blends—it haunts
 the spirit's ear.
I cannot tell about the lark, its wonder-song, its
 note—
In some green-golden meadow hark and heed her
 bursting throat!
In some woods-haunted, leafy bower surrender to
 her call,
And learn that language has no power to bring
 such joy to all.
Go now to Nature's Holy Land, and drink that
 precious song:
The words a poet may command but do its singer
 wrong.
The lark may sing her song for you—for you her
 notes rise free—
I cannot make *my* song ring true—the lark will
 laugh at me!

DIVINE FIRE

A-SUMMERING

Not where castle ruins crown fair mounts
 Nor where gentle brooklets dimpling glide along,
 Not where feathery jets arise in sylvan founts

To chide the broken marble rim with dreary
 song;

Not where birds their orisons and vespers sing,
 Nor by the golden shore of happy inland sea,
 Nowhere could I, would I, spend my life, a-sum-
 mering,

Except, my Garden Princess fair, a-lovering,
 Among thy roses, and with thee.

Not where Fauns and Nymphs their frolics play,
 Nor where broad rivers broader meadows woo,
 Nor where bide the rich, the grave, the wise, the
 gay,

Though there bright joys might rise to greet
 each day anew,

Nor were I to possess the Genii's golden ring

Unless, by magic charm 'twould bring to me
 All the happiness I have a-summering,

Among thy roses, my Heart's Own, a-lovering,
 Among thy roses, and with thee.

L'Envoy

Oh, thou Empress of my heart! Only to be with
 thee!

Let bards of other lands their wildest praises
 sing,

Sing of their sparkling isles and smiling sea,

Only let me sing the happiness I have a-sum-
 mering,

Among thy roses, and with thee.

IN HER SCRIPTER PICTER TEACUP

(An Old Woman in a "Home" Speaks)

I'm homesick, I guess—I don't like the pie—
The meat ain't so tasty, and the tea is like lye;
I ain't fond of 'taties and I ain't fond of ham—
The bread is too crusty and they's glass in the
jam!

I wisht I had some good strong tea,
Brewed for me—

I wisht I had some good black tea,
All served up
In my Scriptor Pictor teacup!

Your cake is store-bought—your 'lasses is strong:
They ain't any buns for ever so long.

I don't like 'em anyways—they're harder'n rocks:
And I don't like them crackers as come in a box!

I wisht I had some right peart tea
Brewed for me—

I wisht I had some right peart tea
All served up
In my Scriptor Pictor teacup!

The dumplins is soggy—the puddin' ain't there—

I'm so lonely for home I just do not care:

My head's in a whirl, my heart's in a knot:

Oh, give me some tea both savory and hot—

Some good, ol'-fashioned, pure black tea,
Brewed for me!

Mostly for me, and then served up
In my Scriptor Pictor teacup!

THE POPLAR

Many trees I love, because
The soft green leaves are cool and sweet,
But there is one I care for most—
The poplar tree across the street.

It stands up high above us all,
Stately and straight 'mong other trees,
Its twinkling leaves like whirring wings
Of crowded, murmuring bees.

The cars go up, the cars go down
And people pass, a noisy throng,
But straight and true the poplar stands,
So gentle, yet so strong.

It 'minds me fair of country lanes—
Brings whole green worlds to me,
And I who strain at city bonds
Look up to find me free.

THE ROSE OF SHARON TREE

The Rose of Sharon tree is full in bloom,
For many days its candle lights are here,
Then Time its fleeting glory shall entomb—
It will not shine again for one long year.
Lift up your hearts and challenge selfish gloom.
Like flowers our many messages appear,
Nor shall I point a single moral out—
Go ask the tree what things to think about!

ADORATION

Imperial hills on every side:
Sun-swept lakes and surging seas,
Mighty rivers, that regally ride—
Wild, mad winds or gentle breeze,
Streams that stray by shadowy trees,
Birds that float on airy tide,
Flowers that fleck the meadows wide,
Stars that form the heavenly frieze!

Ah, messenger who hold the keys
Of loveliness, you tell us more,
And preach one text to him who *sees*,
Until he prays: "Lord, such as these
Lead me to Thee, for I adore
Thy power through Nature's prophecies."

TO A NUN

Oh, cloistered soul of kindly love,
Oh, heaven-born miracle of grace,
Your every aspect speaks of good—
Your robe, your rood, your radiant face!

Pure princess of the holy church—
And were you called to live for God, alone?
To show man by your humble deeds
That we are not, in truth, our own?

You did not give to Him the dregs
And lees of life you could not live;
You offered up in youth's sweet prime
The best, the most you had to give.

Fair sacrifice, I see you stand
By the lucent blue of a lily-starred lake.
Does nature move your heart to grief?
"Ave Maria, for Jesu's sake!"

FIRST CONFESSION

The Abbé bent to the little maid;
She whispered low her plea.
His voice was kind, "Go on, my child,
The Father above loves thee."

The wee one wept and silvery tears
Fell across the quivering cheek—
"I drank," she sobbed, "a kitty's milk."
(She was poverty-pinched and weak.)

The Abbé swung the confessional door
And took the wee one up;
His forgiving voice was to her soul
As wine from the chancel cup.

He raised his eyes as he blessed the child,
And let his great voice free,
"Dear God," he prayed, "may all our sins
Be such as hers, dear Lord, to Thee."

THE CROCUS

Gold burst of flame from the steaming sod!
A fleeting flash from the morning sun!
A flush of light from the night skies won!
A flower! The thought, the word of God!

Wee goblet aglow, in whose chalice lies
A wine-gold dewdrop's sun-bright ray,
A liquid flash from the Gem of day,
Deep-dropped from the glowing, rapt blue skies!

Mute spirit fair of growing things,
But half disclosed, half unrevealed,
Thy mystery from the world is sealed.
Yet endless visions thy beauty brings.

I love thee, flower, for truths untold—
Thy grace is the gift of Grace Divine!
As the soul of man from his face doth shine,
Thy soul shines forth from thy heart of gold.

Sweet fairy flowers thy children are,
While ours are thoughts and dreams as sweet;
Thy children ever the sunlight greet,
And ours the light of the Eastern Star.

Sweet scripture, written in living grace,
Eternal song of gay spring tides,
The light of power that yet abides
Gleams from thy star-gold heart, thy face!

Thou wert a fast-shut bud unfurled;
I saw thee grow in purity—
An Angel's touch wert thou to me,
To me a glimpse of the unseen world.

Gold bursts of flame from the steaming sod!
A chalice! A voiceless fairy bell!
The golden trump of a Gabriel—
Dear flower! The thought, the word of God!

THE INWARD URGE

The jealous, jeering crowds may press and surge
And throw my very life in jeopardy,
But I, who follow still the Inward Urge,
Know well they cannot ever injure me!

It flashes signals as I, troubled, go,
It guards my darkest days of strain and strife,
It makes my very soul, a-tingle, glow
And flame again with pangs of quickening life.

Again it warms, inspires my very soul,
A light upon the mystic Inner Shrine,
This Inward Urge, it keeps me pure and whole
Till what I search and seek as mine—is mine.

I cannot chide, no matter what the guise;
It burns and bursts to guiding, warming flame,
It makes my life's mysterious paradise
Kaleidoscopic—never twice the same.

Unfolding for me, never twice the same,
With each step higher, holier than the last,
The Inward Urge suggests the Master's name,
A drop of wine from His divine repast.

COURAGE

The Courage of Thought is small,
Next greater the Courage of Speech,
Then the Courage of Deeds looms vast
But courages three are not all—
Greater than these, let us teach
The Courage of Silence—the last.

MOTHER

I. Her Voice

If I could hear the opera birds
In golden songs a thousand times,
If I could have my dearest choice—
I should prefer my mother's voice
A-humming childhood's simple rhymes,
Or just her speaking, loving words.
If I could have my dearest choice
I'd let you keep your opera birds!

II. Her Smile

There's something very sweet, indeed,
About the way a mother smiles—
You'd think that she could hear and see
Across a thousand miles.
There's wisdom in the way she does—
She's like the wisest of the sages;
And every day she seems to say,
"I'm born of countless ages."

LACE

(A Yard of Hand-Made Lace)

Oh! Lace, the poem of a weaver's craft,
The poetry of a weaver's art,
The song of the loom art thou!
The mysterie sprite
Of dainty threads once danced,
And leaped along its flowery course
Till from the loom there came
A filmy map of fairyland—
Something to gaze on,
Something to wear,
Which we call lace.
A half yard here—

A bit o' web gossamer thin,
A garland where posies
Run out and in,
Where ribbons laugh and play!
Here a leaf, there a spray,
A knot or two—some tiny squares,
A rivulet of silky waterfalls—
A spider's home, all woven true
As any spider hopes to do,
A dainty, foamy net of mesh—
The length is cut . . .

And this is the work of a toiler!
Handle it carefully, you careless child of ease,
The concept came through ages and in pain.
Like another poem, it is God-inspired,
Like another poem, it has strayed from heaven,
And like another poem to the careless world it's
given.

THE GOOD, THE TRUE, THE BEAUTIFUL

And a good man shall be satisfied from himself—
Proverbs 14, 14.

Artist Nature! A tree, a house, a hill—

Look where you will—

Perhaps the tree in middle-distance stands;

Perchance the hill, with thorn-edged meadow-
lands;

Perhaps the house—it matters not—

Art finds in life its place and plot.

Beauty forever lives in Truth,

And best the good man understands

The tree, the house, the lift of meadow lands.

The house, the tree, the sweep of meadowlands,

God wisely plans—

Through love man gains the gift to fully see,

The power to grasp the rare identity

Of Beauty, Truth, and Good. With Love

Transcendent in his soul, he looks above

Where his rapt vision may behold

A heaven glowing in the affinity

Of Truth and Beauty—in hill, and house, and tree!

ETERNAL RECORD

I am the record of my days—
 No angel needs to write the tome;
I carry marks of all my ways,
 My actions both abroad and home.
I am the total of my deeds,
 Whether I act to bless or curse,
My heart must be the one that bleeds—
 My spouse for better or for worse.
I am the record of my life,
 No court clerk needs to pen a line;
I am the story of the strife,
 Of pleasure and pain that have been mine.
You cannot sentence me to hell—
 You cannot raise my soul to heaven—
Our God has ordered all things well
 And by His power my sins are shriven.

He gives me strength to lift my heart,
 To chose the good and spurn the bad.
He gives me *choice*—I take my part—
 Rejoice, my soul, and be ye glad!

SUMMER SUNSET

When children of my Fancy throng
And Thought, slow-footed, plods along,
I dream of fays among the brakes—
And yonder where the aspen quakes
I see a leafy waterfall!
And through the misty evening trees,
Where cloud-boats float upon the breeze,
I see a chain of limpid lakes!
The sky a massy seascape lies,
The sun beyond forms fairer skies,
Where scattered fires emplume with light!
Then all becomes an invert crystal bowl,
The moon glides out in silver-white—
Wee stars grow sparkly, then the night
Draws velvet curtains 'round my soul;
The things I've seen slip far from sight!

When Thought, heavy-footed, plods to jest at me
I say, "*I know* it's eight P. M.—June three!
I saw the sunset, sir, while YOU lagged on—
I've found more *facts* than your slow mind may
con!"

But when I tell the mystic things I saw,
Old Thought but looks at me with skeptic awe;
And so I scarce believe I saw it all—
The fay, the lakes, the aspen waterfall!

TO A BUTTERFLY

Soft-winged, broad-winged, gilt-winged butterfly,
Thou floatest swiftly, gently, brightly;
May, adrift on rainbow wing,
Is not so fair as thou art fair.
A-fluttering down the sun-warmed air—
Flitting above far fields of clover,
Like some fair flower turned gypsy rover.
Alighting on the mist-white hedge
All dewy bright in the morning light,
Or pausing a moment in thy flight
On the orchid lily's dragon lip,
The nectar from its spur to sip;
Or like a fairy frigate moored
And anchored close where the honey flows
From the golden heart of a fragrant rose;
Or, unmoored, floating the sunny hours
Above gay-tinted seas of flowers.
Afar thou floatest, thou mystery—
Thou magic miracle of motion,
All day, on an airy sunlight ocean
And then thou slip'st at shadowy even,
Like a wandering rainbow, home to heaven.
Thou floatest brightly, gently, swiftly—
Thou gilt-winged, broad-winged, swift-winged
butterfly.

TO A SPIDER

In a web like gold, a thousand-fold
More happy she seems than I,
Though with toilsome fight she wove aright
Her grass-hid home near by.
A toiler true the long day through
And into the dewy even
She spun her thread and made her bed
Far under the blue of heaven.

O'er dew-pearled grasses the firefly passes,
Close by her palace of lace;
From the green of the thicket a fiddler cricket
Adds music; with fairy grace
A wild field rose a-blushing blows
And shakes her dainty head
That through the night, with sweetness, light,
Her fragrance may be shed.

More neighbors kind does the spider find—
She in her world of grasses,
Then the world of men beyond her ken,
Where man meets man and passes.
But I'd rather be myself than she
In spite of human sorrow—
She passes away, but after my day
Closes, God gives the Morrow!

CORN SONG

(Moonrise on a cornfield in Ohio, 1909)

The silent sky is alight with stars,
The jet-green fields are gay with dew,
When down on the rippling sea of corn
Moon and stars shine true—
The silvery disc of a harvest moon
'Mong sailing clouds shines true.

Bewildering ripples of ribbons of gold,
Shine through green shadows of rank and file
Where on the shimmering billows of corn
Moonlight and starlight smile—
Over and through the waving corn
Moonlight and starlight smile.

The heavy breath of a languorous heart
In gleaming mists on the corn-land lies;
And opiate vapors, warm and sweet,
Up from the corn-lands rise
The delicate odors of summer time
Up from the corn-lands rise.

Winds from the west woo forth as lovers,
And stately, tasseling tops bend low;
Ripple, ripple, ribbony ripple,
Caressing the west wind's blow,
Tremulous murmurs of melody marking
The "beat" as the west winds blow.

As the dimpling of waters at sunset in glory
Gleam with the light of the radiant sun,
So quiver the tasseling corn-rows in glory,
While swiftly the moon-shadows run,
Arabesque flashings of star-gleam and shadow
Like lights on swift waters run.

The bountiful glow of the moon pouring down,
And the light-flashing stars on the wind-woven
corn—
Oh, whence are the sources of Glory? I cry,
How is the Beautiful born?—
Let there be beauty, I call to the winds—
And in LIGHT all life's beauty is born!

TO A SHAWL PATTERN

A child, I laughed at the crook-necked squash
design
That graced my grandma's shawl and com-
forters;
It reappeared in clothes, both coarse and fine,
In carpetings and other things of hers.

An artist, then, explained the old design,
Called it a leaf of grass or bush or tree,
But when I heard it came across the brine
The shape appeared a dainty shell to me.

A woman grown, I studied art design—
A vase-form in the patterning I saw—
I noted, too, a peacock, line by line,
An opening bud, a flower without a flaw.

Behold! An isle beyond the sight of land!
My books tell little of this odd design,
So old no man its source may understand—
Its form seems flame—a flash of Fire Divine!

The Persians worshipped Fire and this design,
By Druids brought, was loved in Scottish lands;
And in this symbol a thousand thoughts combine—
Above the ancient fires we warm our hands.

PROGRESSION

Fine tissues, threaded with veinings invisible,
Flowers tower to glory, wither, and die nobly.
Two sexes in them, complete in their virtue;
With their warm, sweet and pulsing tenderness,
They seem to live in form as higher life.
Tissue and texture tender, and tenuous,
As the sweet bodies of contented loves.
Who says that they are a lower order than we?
Perhaps in some distant period we yet shall live,
At some time future rise embodied gloriously
In form as men—in texture as fragrant flowers.

MOODS BY A NEW ENGLAND LAKE—
EARLY EVENING

Veiled in mystery-making, evening half-light
Through which the crimson flame of sky, and
 crests
Of sun-pierced mountains gleam, the valley lake
Now lies in soft repose, its rushes, brakes
And lily-pads fine etched in silver fires.
The plume-like shadow-trees, glow-tinged with
 gold;
Mellow all till earth and sky are one
In twilight.

A gleam of afterglow!
The lake, a broad expanse of quivering copper,
Of molten bronzes, mood-shot, bright and dull,
Is flecked with fiery reds, its ripple-circles
Inlaid with gold. Behold the shadow-blues of
 skies
Unveiled! Behold a vagrant, purple cloud—
A beggar-prince—peers down. The waters weave
With moods—of color, light and shade—to whims
Of sky, and sun, and tenuous twilight air.

The looming hills, tree-girt, sun-shot, ablaze
With fire, possess the plain and pierce the sky,
Suggesting hidden worlds from wooded heights
Where gods place fires on sacred altar stones!

Upon the hills broods the serenity
Of strength, of time, of space—a scene to yield
Rich evidence of underlying peace
For all that lives beneath each flood and flow,
Each stress of storm, each mood, each whim of
heaven.

Life is revealed, as ever toned by moods
Of higher rather than of lower life.
The lake by sky; the hills by sun direct;
The spurt of fern-edged spring, by snows and
rains
And runs that startle dank and green-rocked
caves
To thread the moist, black earth, to fall, to rise
In tinkling sound and silver color, flowing,
Then sink in deep, mysterious waterways:
As willows sway beneath the draping vines,
As birches, maidens, scattered in their play—
The whole responds to moods of other life.

One Truth is plain: no life is lived alone,
But all are bonded fast by links of love;
The mood of Being, of Him whose storms may roar
And burst their angry tumult upon earth,
Who holds the mountains firm, the waters true;
Whose whims of love make paradise in truth.
Here man, a child of Nature, liege with her
Who gave him body, blood, may feel
The moods which glorify the lyric scenes.
In spirit, by the force of love, this Power
Now casts these splendors o'er his deeps of soul,
And tones of flame that gleam like flaring fires
On lake and tree-girt hills illumine him
By law that God himself ordains as best.

PIRATES

When busy wealth of Day is set aside
Then Pirate Clouds, dull-toned and dipping low,
Their freightage stow in corded auric bales.
They cover all with tarpaulins, misty gray,
But floods of gold oft break these wind-blown
shrouds.

They ship—this Pirate Crew—on purple crests,
On pearl-tone opal tides of air, they pull,
Thus weighted, list—then press to pass—they
seek

For Shadow Islands fair, to hide their gains.

This Phantom Fleet flies oft a purloined flag—
Rich red, barred white, against a starry blue!
The lighthouse Sun burns low Day's lamp of red:
The nightwatch Moon is never prone to haste.

That gold, in packets piled, is doomed!
That stolen wealth, in rolling bales, is lost!
The avenging Night, from hidden caves of dark,
Is wheeling close above the Pirate Bands—
Is swooping low upon the straining crews!
Yo ho! The ships between the ebon wings
Now slip, now dip, and sink from mortal sight!

Perhaps the riches, once so fair to filch,
Are turned to idle ash for them now.
The Sack of Rome brought wealth to crumbling
dust:
Barbarians ever find their conquests vain—
There glows no gain without the Mind's true
wealth,
No joy without the Soul to treasure it!

WILD TEAZLE

Wild teasle is like to certain characters,
Straight-standing, as a Puritan would be:
In impoverished and unfavored spots it thrives,
And though it seems unbeautiful at times,
Each tiny blossom (grown in families)
Is exquisite in its unique loveliness.
By thriftiness the teasle saves the rains
In cups that range along its even stem:
It makes the most of every little chance,
Nobility applied to humble ways.
Unfamed, unheralded, and oft alone,
It reaches up to heaven's blue, direct.
In austere dignity, in precision stern
It reaches outward, too, but seldom crowds.

And when the other weeds as waste are burned,
The teasle is retained for factory use.
It works the webs of cloth to fluffiness;
It serves mankind as hands could never do—
Creates anew fair values out of woof,
It fashions luxury effects in weaves,
Makes soft the finest flannels for the babe,
Makes lovelier the blankets which we use
On snapping, frosty nights when stairways creak.
The teasle truly serves the race of men—
Is like to certain types of character.

THE STORM

Silver side of poplar leaves!
Fade-out of sky—dusky gray, with high lights
 golden,
Sudden black!
A wind—gentle—then sinister—
How terrible in its mighty gusts!
The elms tremble frantically, the lindens bend and
 bow their haughty height.

Dead stillness—windless calm,
Silence, breathless, pregnant with doom.

Not a bird in view—soft whirr of worried wings,
The chirp of advice from some feathered mother
 huddling her young.

Breathless, crowding, heavy air;
Stinging silence, the Spirit of Destruction present,
Unseen but powerful, broodingly menacing,
Contemplative of terrors to be wrought.
The Over-soul of Horror gloating.

Crack! Zoom! The Storm! The Storm!
Splitting sensations and the soundless sounds
Too powerful for human ears—and again—briefly
Silence!

Roaring in the distance, approaching with kettle
 drums,
Booming, looming nearer, pulsing ominously, with
 mystic "Om!"
Thunder, thunder, rolling, tolling,
Crash!

Sparkles through the cloud-dense sky
A splintering, chilling snap-snap!
A thread of gold against the black—
A close-up of a drenched world!
Gone before beheld! Lightning!

Crescendo rumblings, increasing cold, ever higher
wind—
Beating wind, pouring water—first splashing
drops,
Then floods—wet winds hammering with fists, and
then with unsportsmanlike,
Greedy fingers; tearing, tramping winds, fighting,
roistering;
With invisible cloaks snapping,
Mad winds, howling insanely, fighting furiously
again—
Flowing—falling, crooning, shouting
The creed of the Christless.

Water-sodden grasses, glistening trees,
A buffeted, torn, shaken world
In the unbroken fury of the storm!

.

I wish to die on a wild, barbaric night,
But not to show a dauntless face to God:
I wish to ride those awful wings of Power
To show to MAN a Faith that's unafraid!

SPRING

I am clothed with tints of dawn, my mantle glint-
ing lies

Soft green, engirdled with gold, the sun of noon-
day skies.

On my head a cap of dreams, with wings like
Mercury wore—

On my feet the feathered boots that speed where
oceans roar.

In my hand the scepter, Sex, its tip a living star,
And so I float on irised wings where lovers wait-
ing are.

My veil, the lace of twilight, my bag, Fortuna's
Purse

My beauty is just my duty, as poets sing in verse.

But I carry the seeds of harvests, and I carry
birth in my hand—

I guide you forth from forests of fear to view
the Promised Land.

SUMMER

Tap lightly the Gate of Summer to tell her you're
glad she is here:

Throw only a chaste young kiss, son, if you feel
you must greet the gay dear.

She's made herself up to be lovely, so playfully
warn her she knows

That men are weak in temptation and she's
donned too beautiful clothes!

Remember, she's really a vampire, and her gar-
dens are riotous rich

Only to lead us to *dreaming*—this sweet and flam-
ing young witch.

We fall for deep looks that she gives us—for she
flatters the children of men

But when we feel we must keep her, she's off on
her journeys again.

Be careful, my son, as you tap at her Gate—re-
member my warning!

Your youth and your time are your riches she'll
carry away in the morning.

She'll entice you the moment she sees you, so toss
her a word and depart—

How stupid and vain are my efforts! Already
she's stolen your heart!

BRONZE RELIEF

Oh, queer little owl in the baby oak!
Sepia toned, with beak like a curving thorn,
That dull blazonry of moon behind,
Buffed gold, holds you in silhouette! A bronze-
relief!
The shadow-brown earth is still as old age itself.
Silent the little owl in the many-twiggged branches;
Motionless the penny-colored leaves, curled, dead!
The air has frost in it, and ice.
A few gay oak leaves, copper and crimson,
Hang like tattered flags, faded, shell-torn,
For the battle of the year is ending;
And the brown-washed evening breathes chill.
What thinks the strange wee owl in the baby oak?
Is the yellow light too bright for you to see
Your way, wee creature, with unblinking eyes like
moons?

VIRILE WINTER

Magnificent season, strong and young,
Winter—gay winter—can never be old!
Dashing, flashing, virile, unsung
Beauty abides in its glistening cold!
Snows that gleam on the withering grass—
Boisterous winds sweep over the plain—
Roguish the snappings wherever we pass—
Yes, winter is here again! Again!

Silvery gleamings of magical light,
Gardens a-sparkle, all mystic and still,
Crystally tinklings like fairies in flight
Rhythmically rise from each valley and hill.

Winter is this with its fern-fronded frost,
And arrowy winds that bluster and blow;
Paradise won—not a “Paradise Lost”—
Gaily bedecked in its diamonds of snow!

Winter, gay winter—can never be old—
Hardest, palest, most chockfull of cheer!
Tricks us to laugh, grow young and grow bold—
Vividest season of all the year!

DANTE

You speak of Homer, and of Milton—blind—
Who wrote the epics of the human race.
You’ve followed men of fame among mankind
And know the course by which each found his
place.
You know that each has wrought his work apart,
That none has basked in fortune’s favoring
grace,
That each has overcome some pain, some smart,
But, as you search the saddened lines on Dante’s
face,
Behold his grief the worst—a broken heart.

CHIMES OF ST. PAUL'S

Dove-like they rise from the tower in the skies,
The notes from the Chimes of St. Paul's.
Arching and flying, soaring and dying,
Each melody trembles and falls.
Visions of Heaven, loving thoughts given,
Beauty that fairly appalls,
In sweetness excite us, in glory delight us,
These echoes that pierce our grim walls,
Down in the street the medley of feet
Are tuned to the beat of those calls,
The wonderful bells of St. Paul's.

Wistful and dreaming, the crowded street teeming
Now prays at the sound of St. Paul's.
High from the bell tower we're told of the new
hour,
And harmony holds us as thralls:
Into the spirit, where mem'ries endear it
This music then wonderfully calls—
True to their master, the notes—slow or faster—
Ride far through fancy's fair halls;
Ever they're ringing, their messages bringing,
These singing sweet chimes of St. Paul's,
"Rejoice!" call the bells of St. Paul's.

MARCHING HOME

Give back our arts and industries and take away
your war:

One century of quiet peace is better, nobler for
We find no use in gore and glare and when you
pillage, burn,

Our hope dies out like emberlight—we hate the
things you yearn.

Gird us again with powers of youth,

Return our vision of joy again—

We are not brutes, we fought for Truth!

Not beasts, but living men.

Ours the humble cottages, the garden plots and
lanes,

The days of work, the hours of play—and yours
the battle gains:

Return our skill, our strong young will, give back
our bodies' force

For we must sow and we must till and we must
“run the course.”

Ours the sword of the Holy Writ,

And not the sabre that flays and slays:

Rend not the ties that time hath knit

Give back our Golden Days.

We seek the cadence of summer so sweet, the
rhythmic thrum of rain,

The perilous beauty of winter white, the dramatic
hurricane.

If not the music of forests rare, the melody of
stars,

Then just one little flower serene between the
pasture bars.

Arm us again with Simple Faith,
And clothe our nakedness with Right—

Let us behold the chimney wraith
From cottage roofs each night.

Spare us our sight and health and strength and
fires that in us glow,

And let us turn the mills of Good to help the old
earth's woe.

Forbid grim hours of sorrowing and let us find
retreat

In memories more comforting than friends we
often meet.

Take not our shield of perfect Trust

Take not our staff of Hope away,

But let our metal plough the dust

And build a stronger way.

War's haversack is full of woes, there's death
upon his steel:

His bullets strike at distant homes—and women
ever feel

The troubles he has brought to bear among the
sons of men—

What tears upon the loved ones' cheeks—how
mothers suffer then.

Strike not the helmet of ways-of-peace,

Our cap of labor and crown of love:

But let the shattering cannon cease

And let us turn above.

Depart, grim war, and let us live and speed the
arts of peace:
By fairer means are conquests won, and if we
would increase
The virtues of our enemies—there's hope for you
and me.
We'll win by wisdom and by love or vain was
Calvary.

THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD

God is love, and love reflects itself
In all that's good.
In happiness, in rhythmic loveliness—
In motherhood.
Deep pleasures come with every breath of life;
On every hand
Eternity unfolds itself; we love,
Then understand.
The world's athrob with rhythm like a pulse—
Heaven's harmony—
The part and product of Love's motherhood,
Oh! Praise to Thee!

MILTON

“They also serve who only stand and wait.”
Think not his universe was endless night.
The dark but curtained off *one* world from him—
Within were countless worlds in ceaseless light.
The darkness, like the ravens, fed his soul,
The silence proved a fountain of delight,
So healing and revealing forces wrought
And such as he shall give earth its sight.

"SHIPMATES"

Out on the ocean, wide and free,
Unmoored, we sail away, away!
Into our faces the tingling spray!
Out on the bright and beckoning sea—
Out on the troubled and treacherous sea—

Into our faces the breeze-blown spray!
The ruddy twilight, the twinkling night,
Mirrored like gems on foam-crests bright;
The moonbeams on the waters lie—
Starbeams on the waters lie—
Unmoored, we sail away, away!

Out on the ocean, wild and free,
Unmoored, we sail away, away!
The wild, mad winds our sail now flay,
Into our faces the stinging spray!
Out on the sad and storm-swept sea—

Out on the sullen, seething sea,
We meet at parting, you and I!
The brutal beauty of stormy pall
Of wind-lashed night enveloping all.
But thus it's ordained, though we smile or sigh,
Parting or meeting—there's music in all!

ANSWERED

Why sing of the sweep of the river?
Why praise the expanse of the plain?
Why hark to the voices of waters,
And rejoice in both sunshine and rain?
And why does a ruined tower move you—
Its gables draped dark with green moss?
And why do you pause in your journey
Beside some gray, weather-worn cross?

There's the symbol of life in the river—
Of hope in the stretch of the plain—
Of change in the moving of waters,
That's fraught with both pleasure and pain.
The rusty old bells in the bell tower,
Unshaken, yet burden the air
With music that breathes of the ages,
A message no sounding bells bear!

When my heart is fair torn with its yearning—
With voiceless desires that arise—
And my life is consumed with its burning,
I see a strange earth and new skies!
I pause—all creation is music,
And melody dwells in all things—
Alike in the sunlight and starlight,
In rains that the sobbing wind brings!

The sight of a hidden grave moves me,
So I pause with reverent breath,
For it tells me of people I know not,
And the end of all journeys—of death!
And the cross on the grave has its meaning,
For its music, like that of the bells,
Has broken through sound into silence,
And in silence its melody swells!

In the cross, in the plain, in the river,
In the storm and the rain's plashing fall
I learn of the love of the Giver—
His symbols of life in it all!
And the cross brings a symphony Nature
Has sung since the morning stars woke;
It gives us the music of silence
That tuned when the Saviour's heart broke.

The rhythm of music and motion
Through Nature was given to man;
The music of death and of silence
Blood-bought in the Infinite Plan.
So I joy in the sweep of the river,
Exult in the stretch of the plain—
I rejoice that in sound and in silence
Are music as poignant as pain!

THE CUP OF BITTERNESS

It is a beaker of iron, not deep as I thought,
But very broad and holds the more for that.

It is ill to drink, but the Voice proclaims that the
gem
Of life is in it: I make to taste, that's all.

Bitter! It puckers my throat and makes me shud-
der,
Grips my heart and dizzies me with sickness.

The second swallow's worse, but I find the third
Is not so bad—so I drink the whole of it.

And when the cup is finished I feel elate
And ineffable pleasure then flits towards me.

Satisfaction fills the once so troubled heart,
And now I love humanity and fear no thing.

Yet I do not find the gem I suffered for,
I am puzzled and may never understand.

For in the bottom, still moist with recent drops,
I see a face . . . and, lo, it is my own!

THE BRINGER-FORTH

I am the Bringer-forth,
The cherished child of God:
My lot is limited—
My spirit's life is broad.

I am the one who does—
In vineyard or in field;
I look to harvest ripe,
The garnering of the yield.

I am the one who dreams—
I plough a furrow straight;
And I am the one who prays,
Nor fears the frown of fate.

On my head the frost of time,
In my heart the song of youth;
I am the Bringer-forth—
And the seed I sow is Truth!

THE NIGHTMAN

I like t' have th' black, black Nightman come,
An' I aren't 'fraid a-tall—
I like t' see his circus p'rade
Uv shadows on th' wall.
Fer they're what the Nightman went an' made
When the Dark swallered up th' earth an' all.
So I jus' say, "Fe-fi-fo-fum,"
An' I like t' have th' Nightman come—
Ner I ain't afraid,
An' that's right,
But . . . I'd ruther have m' mother
Alwuz bring jus' th' teeniest, tiniest *light*!
An' scare away th' imps o' night!

Sometimes th' curtain's pulled away up high
An' I look up an' see
Th' Moon 'way, 'way up in th' sky
A-winkin' down at me.
It's fun t' see th' circus p'rade
Uv shadows scoot frum sight—
Ner I ain't afraid,
An' that's right—
But I'd ruther have m' mother
Alwuz bring jus' th' teeniest, tiniest *light*!
An' scare away th' imps o' night!

But I'm jus' as brave as a soldier 'u'd be,
Ner I never, *never* cry—
But one dark night w'en I
Had purty near gone t' sleep,
I had such a scare—
I didn't darst to peep!

I saw jus' th' ghostliest man—an' he
Wuz big and long
As he could be!
An' I crawled into bed
'N' piled the covers
Right over m' head
Till m' feet—I s'pose—peeked out t' see—
Fer they wuz as cold 's cold could be.
I wasn't afraid—
Yer jus' right—
But, Gee! I wuz glad w'en in came Dad
An' scared 'at ol' Nightman away with a *light*!
'Twas piles o' fun to see him skin from sight!

REINCARNATION?

The tree-bole's dark brown stem of strength,
The frothing jets of green that spray
And flutter through the sun-warmed air,
To make for Earth a fairy day—
This fountain burst of misting green—
It seems I knew it years ago
When it, a sapling, grew unseen.
Oh, in the Light of Endless Hours
I ought to know—the pain is keen!
Oh, Father, why have I forgot?
A flow of singing dreams o'erpowers—
I ought to know—and know it not.

TO MONA OUT OF WORK

How people stare, and how the throngs
Press close to note her searching eyes!
And how they read her gaze amiss!
What's this? Another dread surprise!

The one who swore he would sustain
The girl and help her dire distress
Has only added greater pain
And joined the mocking, mincing press!

But why explain? The world has need
Of Mona—need—but will not heed
Her searching eyes, her pleading eyes—
A little work were heaven's deed.

Just work, to save her honor's prize!
And so we read and read amiss—
What's this? . . . *Death?*
Death! in her pleading, searching eyes.

UNITED

I'd love to hear the "grace" of a butterfly,
As he breakfasts well in the heart of a flower;
I'd like to hear a robin's lullaby,
As she quiets her babies at twilight's hour.
There is no speech of ours they understand—
There are no thoughts that we to them convey,
Except we love the work they do for us—
And gratitude could find no better way.
We are as strangers from a distant land,
And yet we have the single "eye of day"—
We each behold the sun and understand
God's love is for the most and least always.

DRUIDS

If I could see those stairs in carven rocks,
The noble Druid priests ascending there—
And hear their chanting words of praise and
prayer—
And see them hold the mistletoe,
Their bearded faces humbly low,
It would not be of value—I have a stair,
Not carved of granite or fashioned marble white,
But step by step I mount the way to Right:
I need no symbol mistletoe;
His Guidance shows the way to go.

SEEK NOT AFAR

The tropic fruits will quench the tropic thirst—
There is no far-off answer to our need;
The quest of all we ask, both last and first,
Is ours, if we but hearken well and heed.

The mother's milk will feed the baby best,
The father's hand will guard it best from harm;
We are sustained from Mother Nature's breast—
Why seek in distant lands for health and charm?

The very sap within your vitals came
To feed yourself—its power is all for you.
There are no other "forces" known to fame
To serve you as yourself will always do!

You are the center of your universe,
The key to all the problems that are yours;
Declare yourself unbound by care or curse—
Nor look to nostrums for their helps and cures.

Divinest right you have is this: to live—
To grow in grace and happiness, to know
The truest way to gain is just to give,
For you shall reap as surely as you sow!





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